AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR THE OFFSITE UTILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPOSED THOMPSON'S CREEK WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT IN BRAZOS COUNTY TEXAS

Antiquities Permit 5473

By

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Brazos Valley Research Associates
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Project Number 09-37

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ABSTRACT

An archaeological survey for the proposed offsite utilities associated with the Thompson's Creek Waste Water Treatment Plant project along a 300 meter segment of a 12-inch water line in west-central Brazos County, Texas was conducted by Brazos Valley Research Associates (BVRA) on December 5, 2009 under antiquities permit 5473. The area was investigated by a surface inspection as well as shovel testing and probing. No previously unrecorded prehistoric or historic sites were identified and recorded, and no artifacts were collected. It is recommended that City of Bryan be allowed to proceed with construction as planned. Copies of the final report are on file at the Texas Historical Commission, the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL), the City of Bryan, the Texas State Library, CSC Engineering and Environmental Consultants, Inc., and BVRA.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Bill Cullen, P.E. and Scott Schautschick of CSC Engineering and Environmental Consultants, Inc. provided maps and logistical support. The background check for previously recorded sites in the project area was conducted by Carolyn Spock, Head of Records at TARL. Randall Anderson and Tanner Singleton assisted with the shovel testing, and Mr. Singleton is responsible for the photographs that appear in this report. Lili Lyddon of LL Technical Services drafted the figures that appear in this report and was the editor.

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INTRODUCTION

BVRA was retained by the City of Bryan to conduct a Phase I cultural resources survey along a 300 meter segment of proposed 12-inch water line alignment on land on the east and west sides of Jones Road in west-central Brazos County (Figure 1). Based on an examination of the project area as depicted on the topographic map, the soil survey for Brazos County, and a conversation with other archaeologists, the project area was considered to be a low probability area in terms of containing significant prehistoric and/or historic sites. The project is planned for the east side of Jones Road in the right-of-way of Jones Road; however, it is possible that the city may elect to move part of the area to be examined by BVRA to the west side of the road. Since the construction of this project will be financed by a municipality of the State of Texas, an Antiquities Permit was required, and permit 5473 was assigned to this project. The field survey was accomplished on December 5, 2009. The project area is depicted on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5' Chances Store (3096-422) topographic quadrangle (Figure 2).

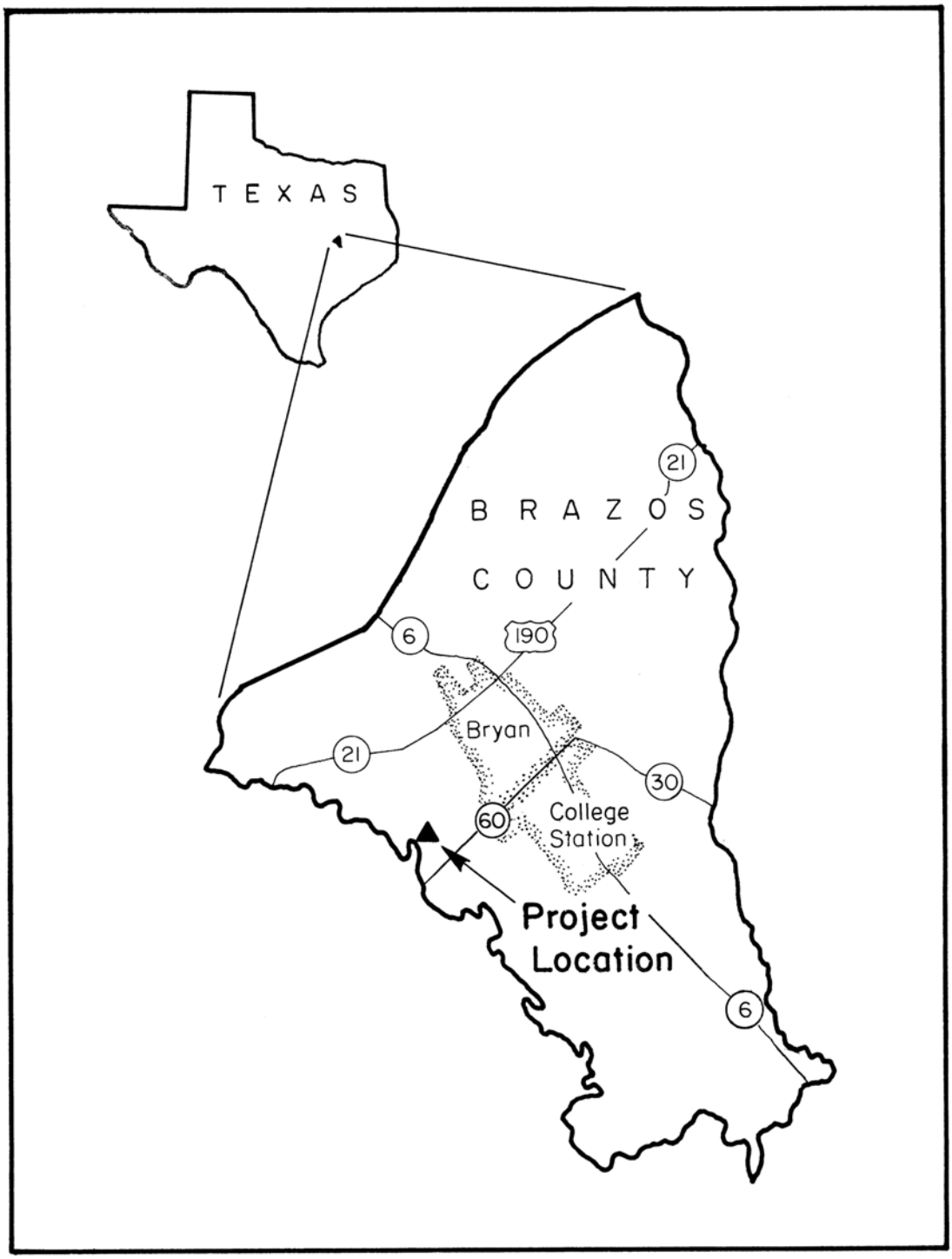

Figure 1. General Location

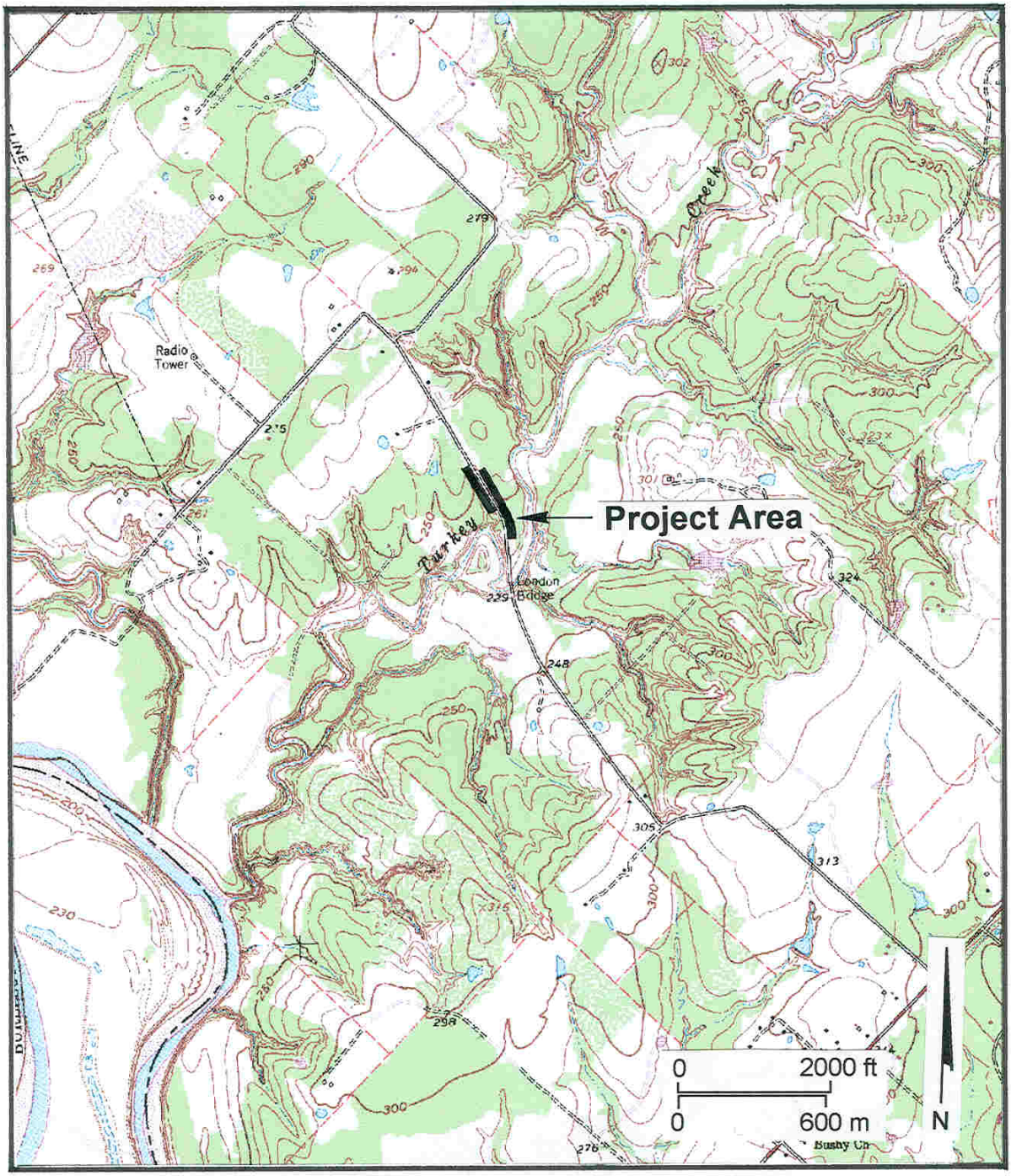

Figure 2. Project Area on Topographic Quadrangle

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project area is located within the West Gulf Coastal Plain section of the Coastal Plain physiographic province as defined by Fenneman (1938:100-120). This physiographic section is subdivided according to the age of the geological formations (Gulf series) that roughly parallel the Texas coastline. The area is hilly and situated within the East Texas timber belt. Gould (1969) describes it as an area characterized by gently rolling to hilly topography with light colored soils that are acidic sandy loams or sands. The climate is subhumid to humid, and the weather is considered to be predominately warm. Annual rainfall for Brazos County is 39.21 inches. A January minimum temperature of 42 degrees Fahrenheit and a July maximum temperature of 95 degrees Fahrenheit combine to produce a growing season of 274 days (Kingston and Harris 1983:180). The altitude above mean sea level in the county varies from 200-400 feet. In the project area, the altitude is 240 to 260 feet above mean sea level. According to the soil survey for Brazos County (Chervenka 2003:Sheet 31), the soil in the project area consists of Robco loamy fine sand, 1 to 3 percent slopes (RoB). This soil is found in the uplands and on terraces and is described as very gently sloping. The surface layer is fine sand to 15 inches, and the subsurface layer is loamy fine sand from 15 to 28 inches. The subsoil is clay loam. It is moderately well drained, and the depth to the water table is between 1.5 and 3.5 feet.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

According to the Office of the State Archeologist, Brazos County is located in the Southeastern Region of Texas (Figure 3). A check of the records at TARL revealed that significant prehistoric and historic sites have been recorded in the county. Prehistoric sites in this area are typically found on sandy ridges and uplands in close proximity to dependable sources of water such as creeks and rivers. Artifacts associated with the Archaic and Paleo-Indian periods have been found at a few sites, but no sites that date solely to these periods are known in the county, and Late Prehistoric sites are the most numerous. One site (41BZ132) containing an Archaic projectile point and burned rock was found during a previous survey of the Traditions Golf Course (Moore 2000), but additional work is needed to determine if this is a pure Archaic site. Prehistoric burials have been found at sites in adjacent counties such as 41BU16 and 41BU17 in Burleson County and eroding from the Brazos River, but no burials have been reported at sites in Brazos County. The three largest surveys in the county were for the Tradition Golf and Country Club at University Ranch by BVRA (Moore 2000), the Bush Presidential Library Center by Archaeology Consultants (Moore and Warren 1993), and the White Creek Archaeological Project by the Archaeological Research Laboratory at Texas A&M University (Thoms 1993). Historic sites are not always tied to water and can consist of standing structures dating to the 19th and 20th centuries and isolated features associated with farming and ranching such as cisterns, wells, and outbuildings. In certain areas historic bridges and cemeteries are present. One major historic site is the Richard Carter house site (41BZ74) that dates to the 19th century (Carlson 1983, 1987). This site represents the earliest historic settlement in the county at circa 1831.Two early log structures have been reported in the county. One is an early cabin (41BZ93), and the other is a log crib or cabin (41BZ89) that has been destroyed. The town of Boonville (41BZ91), including Boonville Cemetery, was the first county seat of Brazos County and was established in 1841 (Webb 1952:188).

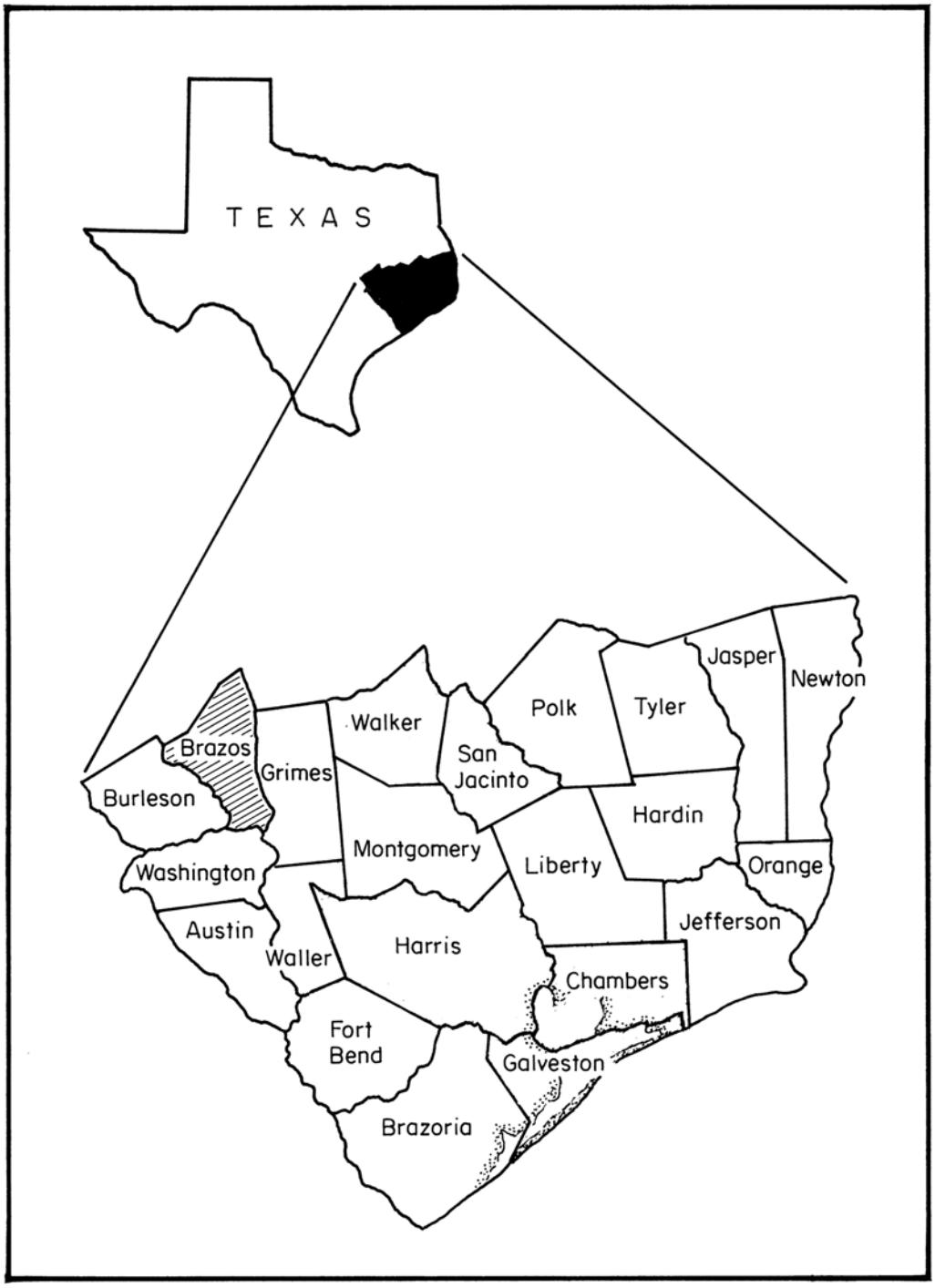

Figure 3. Southeast Texas Cultural-Geographical Region
(After Moore 1989)

METHODS

Prior to the commencement of the field survey, the Texas Historic Sites Atlas and the site files at TARL were checked for previously recorded sites and surveys in the project area and vicinity. This search revealed that no known sites are present within the project area, and no surveys have been conducted in the area. The project area was examined through a surface inspection and shovel testing. Since it is possible that a portion of the water line may be moved to the west side of Jones Road, tests were excavated on both sides of the road. Shovel tests were dug at intervals of 50 meters when possible. However, no tests were dug in a low-lying area that contained standing water in the ditch. In all, ten shovel tests were dug, and their approximate location is depicted in Figure 4. Shovel tests were terminated when clay, standing water, or obvious road fill was encountered. The size of each test was 30 x 50 cm and varied in depth from 50 to 100 centimeters below the existing ground surface. All excavated fill was screened through ¼ inch hardware cloth. Data obtained from shovel testing were recorded on a shovel test log (Appendix I). The project area was also documented through digital photography.

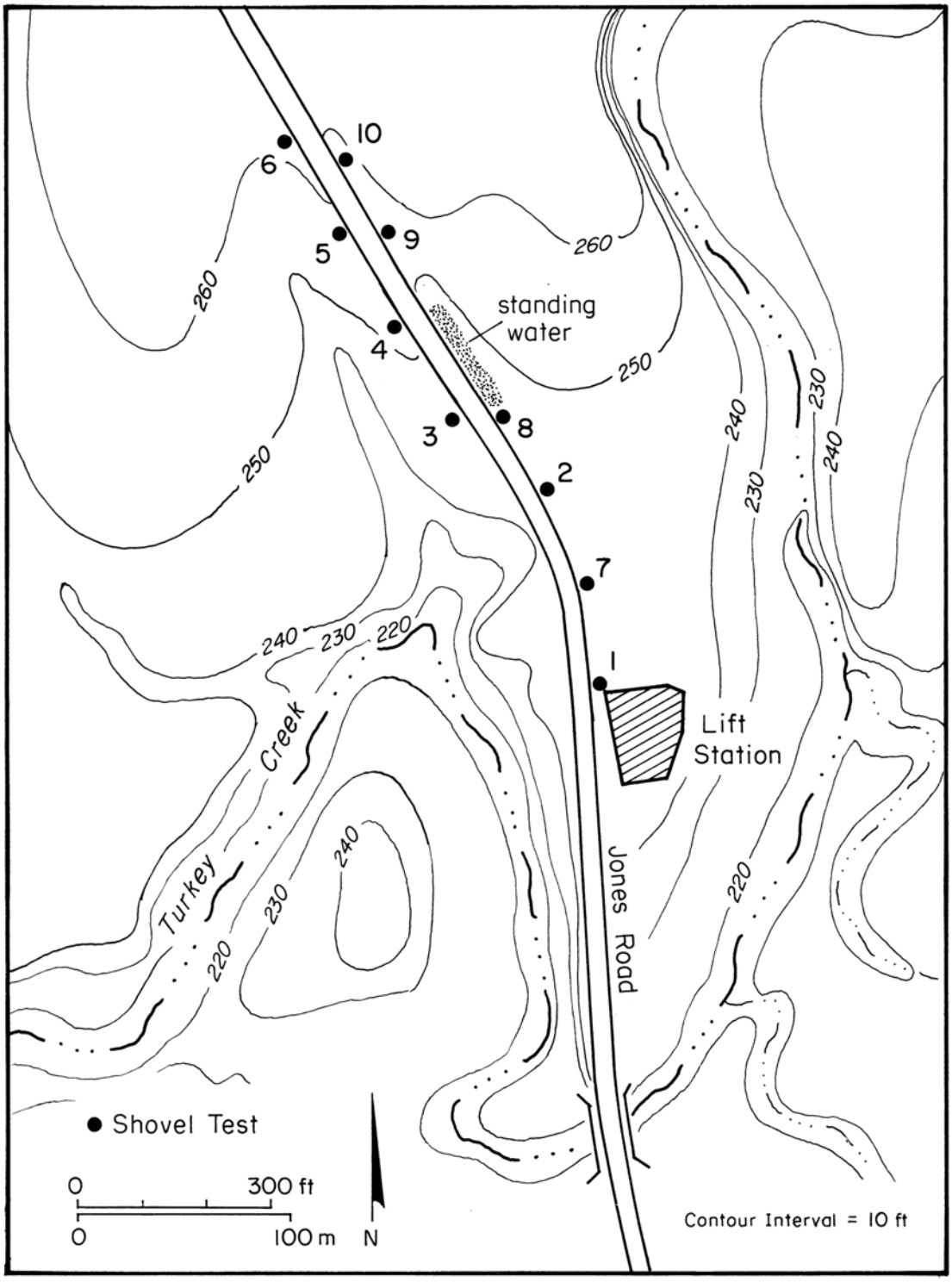

Figure 4. Location of Shovel Tests

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Examination of the files at TARL revealed no archaeological sites have been recorded in the Area of Potential Effect (APE). According to the Texas Archeological Sites Atlas, professional archaeologists have not surveyed this area. The project area was adequately covered, and no cultural materials were observed. The segment of the project area that is most likely to contain an archaeological site is a hill at the 250-foot contour (see Figure 4) on the east side of Jones Road. In this area, the water line will be placed in a ditch six meters below the apex of this hill. A surface inspection of the exposed cut bank of the hill revealed sandy soil overlying firm clay, and the water line will be placed well beneath the sandy stratum. On the west side of Jones Road, this hill continues; however, the tests dug in this area were negative. There is a hill at the 240-foot contour about 1500 feet to the southwest that overlooks the main channel of Turkey Creek. This appears to be a likely setting for a prehistoric site, but it is outside the APE. The APE has been disturbed by road construction and buried utilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

No previously unrecorded sites were found in the project area. Therefore, it is recommended that the City of Bryan be allowed to proceed with construction as planned. It is always possible that archaeological sites are missed during any cultural resources survey. Should areas containing prehistoric or historic artifacts not discussed in this report be discovered during construction, the Texas Historical Commission must be notified immediately and all work stopped in the area of concern until the situation can be evaluated.

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APPENDIX I: SHOVEL TEST LOG

Test	Depth	Results	Comments
1	100 cm	negative	clay at 100 cm (possible fill)
2	50 cm	negative	water at 50 cm
3	50 cm	negative	clay at 50 cm
4	80 cm	negative	clay at 80 cm
5	80 cm	negative	clay at 80 cm
6	80 cm	negative	clay at 80 cm
7	70 cm	negative	water at 40 cm
8	55 cm	negative	water at 55 cm
9	60 cm	negative	clay and water at 60 cm
10	80 cm	negative	clay at 80 cm